Volunteer Background Checks

Bloomington Volunteer Network Discount Program

Receive reduced pricing as a partner organization of the Network.

Register for a Verified Volunteers Account

Contact Troy Gerber at Verified Volunteers directly and mention that your organization is partner of the City of Bloomington Volunteer Network to receive the discounted pricing. Set up can be completed in 1-2 days.

Troy Gerber, Verified Volunteers | (612) 723-8377 | troy@verifiedvolunteers.com

Discounted Pricing: City of Bloomington Volunteer Network Partners

The Volunteer Network has obtained reduced pricing with Verified Volunteers that reflects an industry-wide standard for background check comprehensiveness.

ADVANCED LEVEL: $12.00
- Social Security Trace (provides an address history)
- Government Watch List Search (OFAC)
- 50 State Dept. of Justice Sex Offender Registry (Dru Sjodin)
- ADVANCED Criminal History Locator Search including:
    - Nationwide Database Search with primary source validation (county level)
    - Automatic current county/state of residence search
- <u>Monthly</u> Basic Criminal History Locator Search Updating (for up to 1 year)

COMPLETE LEVEL: $26.00
- Social Security Trace (provides an address history)
- Government Watch List Search (OFAC)
- 50 State Dept. of Justice Sex Offender Registry (Dru Sjodin)
- COMPLETE Criminal History Locator Search including:
    - Nationwide Database Search with primary source validation
    - Arrest Direct Database Search with primary source validation
    - Unlimited county/state searches from last 7 years address history (based on SSN trace)
- Unlimited alias/maiden name searches from last 7 years address history (based on SSN trace)
- <u>Monthly</u> Basic Criminal History Locator Search Updating (for up to 1 year)

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL CHECKS AVAILABLE
- $6 + State Fee Motor Vehicle Record Check
- $6 Consumer Credit Check
- $8 Reference Interview

Frequently Asked Questions

Is my organization a Volunteer Network Member?

It's easy to check! If your organization maintains an active profile on the Volunteer Network website - you are a member. Check your listing online at BloomingtonVolunteerNetwork.org/ HOC__Browse_Organizations_Page, or contact us to ask about your membership status.

We don't run checks on our volunteers now. Should we start?

There are many components to an effective volunteer risk management and screening process. Background checks are only one - and are not necessary for every volunteer in your program. Read more about effective screening online at BloomingtonVolunteerNetwork.org/BackgroundCheckFAQs to access information including our handout: the 10 Steps of effective screening.

But our organization does a State Police Check on our volunteers, isn't that enough?

If you depend solely on a nationwide system (or Indiana's limited criminal history - also known as a State Police Check) - to protect your organization, odds are good that you're unwittingly including volunteers in your program who could place your organization at risk.

The Indiana State Police background check runs the individual's name through the NCIC (National Crime Information Database) and the state's database, and reviews the results to see if the candidate has been arrested for any of 28 specific felony offenses. If so, it designates the individual as "disqualified." However, an individual designated as "qualified" under this system could very well have been convicted of a different type of felony or any number of misdemeanors.

Because of the gaps in NCIC and similar national criminal databases, their use should be just one part of a larger screening effort that also delves into county-level criminal searches, federal court data, name changes, and other sources.

We don't have the budget, no matter what price. What are our options?

This is a question of risk. Contact the Volunteer Network or view the resources online at BloomingtonVolunteerNetwork.org/backgroundcheckdiscount to learn more about how to evaluate what type of screening your volunteers need and the effectiveness of that screening in revealing a comprehensive criminal background history for your volunteers.

Verified Volunteers also gives you the option to share the cost of background screening with your volunteers from 0%-100%. This can cover or help offset the cost of screening for your organization.

That said, there are many types of criminal background screening that are absolutely free. View an overview of general background check pricing including some FREE options at BloomingtonVolunteerNetwork.org/BackgroundCheckFAQs.

Does the Volunteer Network receive any money from this system?

No. The Volunteer Network acts simply as a conduit to a negotiated lower price. The Volunteer Network receives no money or gifts for our role in this offer. Several of our member organizations asked us to research better options for back ground checks and this is the result of that request.

FAQ's continued

We have many international students and UNDOCUMENTED residents that volunteer with us. How can I check them if they do not have a SS#?

- **International students -** Our government requires extensive checking for students and individuals here on temporary visas. They have done much of the background checking for you - including the criminal & sex offender search! You can certainly run them through the ADVANCED level screening without a SS# to screen them again using their name.

- **Undocumented residents -** An ADVANCED level check can be run without submitting a SS#. It will do everything except the SS# search.

Why did the Bloomington Volunteer Network select Verified Volunteers?

As a Points of Light HandsOn Affiliate, the Bloomington Volunteer Network is qualified for a discounted rate that we can share with our partner organizations. Verified Volunteers is designed to make background screening of volunteers faster, easier and less costly for nonprofits and volunteers themselves.

Benefits For Nonprofit Organizations:

- **Volunteers can share their results.** Verified Volunteers saves money by allowing volunteers to share their background screening status with multiple organizations at no additional cost to the nonprofit or the volunteer.

- **Provides a standard check.** Verified Volunteers provides a consistent standard for volunteer background screening that can be recognized and accepted by volunteer managers everywhere.

- **Paperless Administration.** Verified Volunteers offers paperless administration and secure storage to eliminate paperwork, reduce administrative time, and stress about handling confidential information.

- **Volunteers are re-screened monthly free of charge for one year.** Verified Volunteers updates background checks automatically for a year, giving nonprofits the added security of monitoring their volunteer corps for new criminal records and empowering the volunteer to share an up-to-date background check report with other organizations.

- **FCRA Compliant.** Verified Volunteers is compliant with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and state laws.

Benefits for Your Volunteers:

- **Reduces Need for Multiple Checks.** Verified Volunteers saves time and money by eliminating the need for multiple background checks. Once you complete an online background check with Verified Volunteers, your screening status is current and you have the option of reusing it with any other Verified Volunteer member organization.

- **Control Your Information.** Verified Volunteers allows you to own, control, maintain and share your background check through Verified Volunteers self-service online platform.

Verified Volunteers has been rolled out in partnership with a growing number of Points of Light HandsOn Network volunteer action centers around the country.

How Does it Work?

Below is a typical work flow of screening volunteers via Verified Volunteers:

1. **Train/Orient your volunteer candidates** with your regular protocol.

2. **Distribute and collect any privacy forms** to volunteers – as per your confidentiality policy

3. **Send invitation to volunteers to initiate the screening process**. You have three options of how to do this. Consent/release forms are included in the online process for volunteers – you do not need to distribute these in paper form unless you prefer to do so.

   a. Send an invitation manually through your Verified Volunteers account

   b. Send a special code to a volunteer via your work email

   c. Upload a spreadsheet of several volunteer names and emails to your account and Verified Volunteers will send them all the invitation at the same time. This is good for large orientation sessions where everyone will undergo a screening.

4. **Volunteers will create an account and submit their information to Verified Volunteers directly.**

5. **Screening results will be posted typically within 1-5 days** (depending on local checks that are required) for both the organization and volunteer.

6. **Review the background screening results online**
   You will be notified via email when a volunteer's background check is complete. However, you don't have to wait for that notification as the Dashboard contains a full listing of all volunteers affiliated with your organization and the status of each. Mark each volunteer eligible or ineligible.

7. **The volunteer will be notified of your review via email**. You may also make appropriate notifications to any volunteer who is marked as ineligible and therefore disqualified.

8. **Verified Volunteers provides templates for your use with the disqualified volunteer applicant** with the following documents:

   a. Fair Credit Reporting Act - Summary of Rights

   b. Letter of disqualification

   c. Copy of actual screening report (results)

9. **Distribute any volunteer credentials (ID) to all volunteers who are approved as eligible**.

10. **Your Volunteer Records are maintained online** in your account and can be resubmitted or evaluated for further reporting at any time. This eliminates need to maintain confidential records and information in paper format at your organization.

Your Risk Management Program
Things to Consider When Developing Background Screening Protocols

While no screening process can offer absolute assurance, implementing these recommended guidelines in your screening process can engender public confidence and lessen the risk of exposure to liability due to a lack of knowledge regarding your volunteers' background. More specifically, an effective screening process assists organizations:

- Raise public awareness of quality programs offered.
- Make the safety of all participants, particularly the most vulnerable groups (children, elderly, mentally challenged, etc.) a top priority.
- Keep people who have a history of inappropriate behavior or who are unfit out of the organization.
- Select the 'most qualified' volunteers and paid staff for positions.

The Background Screening Process is an ongoing process and should be subject to review and changes at any time.
This list is based upon industry practices in private, public and non-profit areas.
For additional information regarding background screening practices, visit the National Association of Professional Background Screeners at www.napbs.com or

In addition to this outline, the Volunteer Network recommends that you consult your risk management specialist and legal counsel to ensure that all local and state laws and practices are a part of your local policies and practices.

What are your criteria for a comprehensive background screening for volunteers?
There are many levels of screening available and you should consider the level needed for each of your volunteer positions after consulting with your board and legal counsel. A basic guideline for a comprehensive background screening or background check for a volunteer is defined to include the following.

- **Social Security Verification**
  Verify the name of every volunteer against the Social Security Number provided. This helps to eliminate the possibility of false names and/or information.

- **Address Trace**
  Verify the current address and identify any previous address of every volunteer. This information is utilized to determine the jurisdiction in which the background screening is conducted.

- **State or County Criminal Record Check**
  A Statewide or Countywide (depending on the jurisdiction) criminal record check is performed to capture all misdemeanor and felony convictions in that jurisdiction. The search should be conducted in the jurisdiction with the longest and most current residency.

- **National Criminal History Data Base search**
  There is no one national record check whether through the government or private sector that identifies every crime ever committed. However, there are now criminal history data bases available that contain millions of criminal records and cover the much of the United States. These data bases can be accessed and used to supplement the local criminal history search. This is beneficial in expanding the search across the country but should not be used as a stand-alone source for your background screening.

- **Sex Offender Registry**
  Search of the appropriate state sex offender registries based on the address history. This is an important supplement to criminal history searches but should not be used as a stand-alone source for your background screening.

- **Timely results**
  A background screening process should be timely and results should be returned within 10 business days on average to allow for proper planning and assignment of volunteers.

City of Bloomington Volunteer Network
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Screening Frequency

How often should Background Screenings be conducted? This should be determined by your organization. The fact that someone may have a clear background check once does not insure that they will never commit serious crimes in the future.

In the period of one year, it is entirely possible for someone to be arrested and convicted through most of the court systems in the United States.

Confidentiality

To protect the privacy of the volunteer it is critical that each organization have a confidentiality policy and that the policy be made known to each prospective volunteer.

The policy should include a statement of respect for the privacy of the volunteer and should establish that information received during a volunteer's screening process will not be disclosed outside of the organization and will be shared within the organization only on a "need to know" basis. This would include keeping the consent/release form which includes personal data on the volunteer in secure locations and only in the hands of authorized personnel.

The policy which is to be made known to all prospective volunteers, should also acknowledge that the organization might, in special circumstances, have a duty to disclose to third parties, including government agencies, certain types of information when the law requires.

Proper record keeping is critical as well. You must insure that the applicants screened and results are recorded along with the date. By tracking this information you will be able to insure 100% compliance to screening and have a formal record that can be used to defend against any potential litigation in the future.

FCRA Compliance

The Fair Credit Reporting Act is a federal law (codified at 15 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.) that regulates the collection, dissemination, and use of consumer information.

If a volunteer is designated as Ineligible, it is your responsibility, as the volunteer organization, to follow the Pre-Adverse and Adverse Action process as outlined by the FCRA. Verified Volunteers supplies sample letters for your review and/or use.

The FCRA requires a 2 step process for adverse action: Step 1 requires a pre-adverse action letter, which includes a copy of the background screening report and a FCRA summary of rights, and needs to be provided to the volunteer. If the volunteer does not dispute the information within 5 days, an Adverse Action letter is sent which denies the position (Step 2).

Verified Volunteers is an FCRA compliant vendor, providing the required verification for any reported offense.

Criteria for Exclusion

You will need to determine your criteria that would disqualify a person and prohibit them from serving as a volunteer if found guilty* of an offense. These criteria for ineligibility may vary depending on the volunteer assignment (e.g. volunteer is working with children, vulnerable populations, or monies; or if the offense is in direct opposition to your mission), but all criteria should be clearly stated and documented in your protocols.

Examples are included below to guide your determination of criteria.

SEXUAL OFFENSES

- **Sexual offenses**
  Examples include: child molestation, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sodomy, prostitution, solicitation, indecent exposure, etc.
  Time since offense: ❑ Regardless of time since offense ❑ Specific time since offense _____

FELONIES

- **Felony Violence**
  Examples include: murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated Burglary, etc.
  Time since offense: ❑ Regardless of time since offense ❑ Specific time since offense _____

- **Felony offenses other than violence or sex**
  Examples include: drug offenses, theft, embezzlement, fraud, child endangerment, etc.
  Time since offense: ❑ Regardless of time since offense ❑ Specific time since offense _____

MISDEMEANORS

- **Misdemeanor violence offenses**
  Examples include: simple assault, battery, domestic violence, hit & run, etc.
  Time since offense: ❑ Regardless of time since offense ❑ Specific time since offense _____

- **Misdemeanor drug & alcohol offenses**
  Examples include: driving under the influence, simple drug possession, drunk and disorderly, public intoxication, possession of drug paraphernalia, etc.
  Time since offense: ❑ Regardless of time since offense ❑ Specific time since offense _____

- **Any other misdemeanor**
  Example include: contributing to the delinquency of a minor, providing alcohol to a minor, theft if person is handling monies, etc.
  Time since offense: ❑ Regardless of time since offense ❑ Specific time since offense _____

*Guilty means that a person was found guilty following a trial, entered a guilty plea, entered a no contest plea accompanied by a court finding of guilty, regardless of whether there was an adjudication of guilt (conviction) or a withholding of guilt. This definition does not apply if criminal charges resulted in acquittal, Nolle Prosse, or dismissal.

PENDING CASES

- You will need to determine criteria regarding pending cases. For anyone who has been charged for any of the disqualifying offenses or for cases pending in court, whether that are or are not permitted to volunteer until the official adjudication of the case.

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